

February 2004

Technical Update For Municipal Drinking Water Systems

Warning Notices

This update provides details on when owners or operating authorities of systems must post warning notices of potential problems with the drinking water in the system, where the notices must be posted, and what they should look like.

Systems Affected

Warning notices of potential problems must be posted according to Schedule 19 of the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation (O. Reg. 170/03) by owners or operating authorities of all municipal drinking water systems except large municipal residential systems. Owners or operating authorities of large municipal residential systems will be advised by the Medical Officer of Health as to what action they must take regarding public warnings, including when and how notices are to be given, so that these actions are carried out in conjunction with any Boil Water Advisories or Drinking Water Advisories that may need to be issued by the Medical Officer of Health through various media.

The requirements to post warning notices of potential problems apply to the following municipal systems:

- small municipal residential systems
- large municipal non-residential systems
- small municipal non-residential systems

Requirements to post notices

Warning notices must be posted if:

- A corrective action step according to Schedule 18 specifies that the system owner or operating authority must ensure that all users are notified to use an alternate source of drinking water or to bring water to a rapid rolling boil for at least one minute before use (Notice A - see next page)
- The system is not presently in compliance with corrective action requirements of Schedule 18 (Notice A)
- The system is not presently in compliance with microbiological sampling and testing requirements of Schedules 11 or 12 (Notice B)

Note that the posting of warning notices of potential problems does not exempt the system from having to be in compliance with any of the requirements of Schedules 11, 12 and 18, as applicable.

Posting locations

Warning notices must be posted in prominent locations where they are likely to come to the attention of users of the system

If the system serves a designated facility, warning notices must be posted at every entrance to every building and every structure that is part of that designated facility. If the designated facility does not have any building or structure, warning notices must be posted at a location where they are likely to come to the attention of all persons who enter the facility.

Warning notices available from the ministry

Warning notices must either be provided by the Ministry of the Environment or approved by a ministry Director. There are two warning notices available free-of-charge from the ministry for the purposes of posting warning notices of potential problems. The proper notice must be used according to the specific situation, as outlined above.

NOTICE A – Do not drink



NOTICE B – Not Tested



Warning notices are available by calling the Ministry of the Environment's Public Information Centre toll free at 1-800-565-4923 or (416) 325-4000.

For more information contact:

Public Information Centre

Ministry of the Environment

135 St. Clair Avenue West

Toronto, ON M4V 1P5

Tel: 1-800-565-4923 or (416) 325-4000

www.ene.gov.on.ca